



## Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

Office of the Bishop *The Rt. Rev. Alan M. Gates, Bishop*

September 2018

Dear Friends,

I invite each worshipping community of our diocese to participate in the Massachusetts Indaba 2019!

In adopting our mission strategy at Diocesan Convention in 2016, we committed to building our relationships by affirming the diverse gifts of our congregations; addressing painful divisions and working across differences; strengthening the bonding ligaments between individuals, congregations and diocesan bodies; and honoring the contributions of every generation.

Over the past decade, the Indaba model of coming together for purposeful conversation, arising out of the southern African context, has helped the Anglican Communion address these same issues. Its value has been demonstrated through small group gatherings among bishops, by groupings of dioceses from around the communion, and in a wide variety of diocesan and local conversations. Indaba has been a powerful and transformative experience for Anglicans around the world. Now we have an opportunity to experience it here in Massachusetts.

The Diocesan Council's Indaba Working Group has met with those who have overseen and evaluated previous Indaba encounters, and has experienced building relationships among themselves using the Indaba model. The Massachusetts Indaba 2019 will join together teams from congregations around our diocese to experience the variety of ministry contexts in our diocese. Through a series of weekend encounters, participants will learn about the diversity of our communities, the richness of our congregations and the talents of our people.

Following is information about the Massachusetts Indaba 2019 and what is required to participate. This fall you will have opportunities to hear more from Indaba Working Group members. In forming your Indaba team, please remember that this is a commitment not only to yourselves but to the two other congregations with whom you will be partnered.

Our goal is deeper understanding of our common life and mission. The promise is that we will better discern what God is calling us to do together. I encourage you to participate in the Massachusetts Indaba 2019!

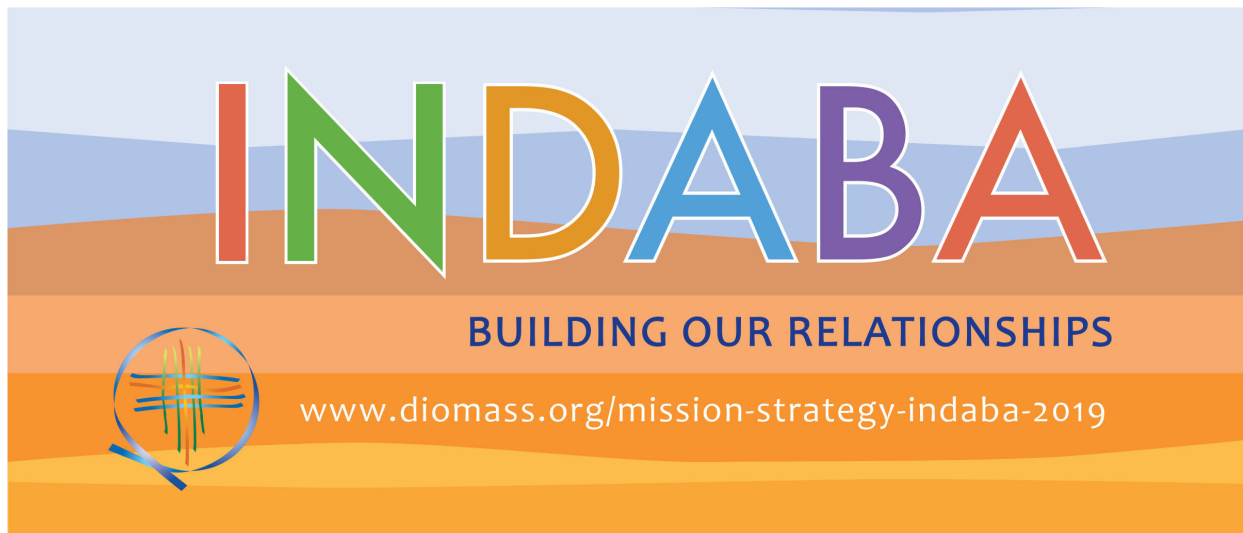
Faithfully yours,

+ 

Alan M. Gates

### **The Indaba Collect**

Holy God, as we look to the Trinity—the unity in diversity—give us the courage to embrace your image in each other, forgive us the sins that tear us apart and embolden us to work together for the sake of your mission. This we ask through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



**Your congregation is invited to participate in the Massachusetts Indaba 2019!**

The mission strategy adopted by our diocese in 2016 expressed our desire and commitment to initiate new relationships across our diocese. Specifically, the mission strategy invites us to develop “opportunities for teams from congregations to visit other congregations, sharing worship and learning about one another.” (Action 4a) Over the past year, the Indaba working group of Diocesan Council has designed an opportunity for congregations to engage this goal of deepening relationships in 2019.

**What is Indaba?**

Indaba is a Zulu word which means gathering for purposeful discussion. It is both a process and a method for engaging one another, in which we listen and learn about the opportunities and challenges that face us in our various communities of faith. Conversations in Indaba follow a “Mutual Invitation” model in which everyone has an opportunity to speak and to listen to one another respectfully.

At the Lambeth Conference of 2008, bishops from throughout the Anglican Communion participated in Indaba conversations with one another as an alternative to the more familiar parliamentary style of meeting. The format was so successful in deepening understanding among the bishops that, with leadership from the Continuing Indaba project of the Anglican Communion Office, several groupings of three dioceses from around the globe were brought together in Continuing Indaba conversations.

In 2011 and 2013, teams of eight from four triads of dioceses around the world visited with one another in each place to experience firsthand what it means to be an Anglican Christian in very different contexts. One of the biggest epiphanies was how varied our contexts are and how much there is we need to learn about one another, not only across dioceses, but even across the worshipping communities within a diocese.

As a crucial element of our mission strategy in the Diocese of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Indaba 2019 is designed to help us deepen our appreciation and understanding of the amazing collection of people and resources that God has brought together here. All of us in the Diocese of Massachusetts are joined together in a common mission to share the good news and love of Jesus Christ. With this greater understanding, we will be better equipped to join together in pursuing God’s mission.

### **What is the Massachusetts Indaba 2019?**

The 232nd annual Diocesan Convention in 2017 adopted an implementation plan for the mission strategy that includes “developing opportunities for teams from congregations to visit other congregations, sharing worship and learning about one another.” (Action 4a)

Convened by the Mission Strategy Implementation Team, a working group studied the Indaba model as a format for addressing this goal. All worshiping communities in our diocese are invited and encouraged to participate.

- Each interested congregation or community is asked to designate a team of four persons, representing a diverse picture of the membership, as its Indaba team.
- For orientation, all the participating Indaba teams will attend a kickoff gathering together.
- The Indaba team of each participating congregation will be assigned to partner with the Indaba teams of two other communities from other deaneries.
- Three weekends (Saturday morning through Sunday afternoon) in 2019 have been chosen for the Indaba Encounters. On one of the three Indaba encounter weekends, each of the three Indaba partner teams will host the other two partner teams, including overnight accommodations in members' homes.
- The process for these participating congregations will conclude with a gathering of all the Indaba teams to share their experiences and hopes for the future.

### **What is the make-up of an Indaba team?**

Each participating congregation is asked to appoint four persons, representing a diverse picture of the membership, as their Indaba team. The team is to include, where possible, a young adult aged 18-30, a member of the elected lay leadership and a member of the clergy, preferably the rector or priest-in-charge in congregations with a settled clergyperson.

Each member of the Indaba team is expected to commit to participate in the orientation kickoff, in all three weekends of the Indaba Encounters, and in the closing gathering.

The members of each Indaba team are expected to coordinate hosting the other partner teams on their weekend Indaba Encounter. A critical part of the Indaba Encounter weekend is that members of the visiting teams are to be guests in the homes of members of the hosting congregation.

### **What is the structure of the Indaba Encounter weekends?**

The format of each Indaba Encounter weekend is flexible, within a framework designed by the planning team. The two visiting Indaba teams are asked to arrive at the host church by 10 a.m. on Saturday. The visiting teams can expect to depart on Sunday afternoon, following a concluding conversation held during or after lunch.

Between those times, the two visiting teams focus on appreciating the host's context:

Saturday: Morning: Introducing the internal life of the host congregation  
Afternoon: Understanding connections to the community  
Evening & overnight: Personal conversations with host team  
Sunday: Morning: Worship and fellowship with the entire host congregation  
Afternoon: Lunch and closing conversation of the three Indaba teams

The diocesan planning team provides an Indaba Idea Sheet to aid each Indaba team in planning their weekend as host. Enjoying fun times together is encouraged!

### **What else is expected of the Massachusetts Indaba 2019 partnerships?**

Congregations are asked to lift up one another in prayer throughout the year. They are encouraged to share a symbol of their community with each of their Indaba partner congregations and to display prominently the symbols that their partners share with them. Similarly, partner congregations are encouraged to share newsletters and other relevant announcements with each other throughout the year.

Indaba team members are encouraged to stay in touch with members of their own team and their partner Indaba team members between Indaba Encounter weekends and to remember their own team and partner team members in prayer every day.

### **What is the calendar for the Massachusetts Indaba 2019?**

- **Friday, Nov. 30, 2018:** Congregation registration deadline  
*Find registration link at [www.diomass.org/mission-strategy-indaba-2019](http://www.diomass.org/mission-strategy-indaba-2019)*
- **Saturday, Jan. 12, 2019, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.:** Kickoff Orientation for all Indaba teams at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Boston
- **Saturday-Sunday, March 30-31, 2019:** Indaba Encounter Weekend #1
- **Saturday-Sunday, June 22-23, 2019:** Indaba Encounter Weekend #2
- **Saturday-Sunday, Oct. 5-6, 2019:** Indaba Encounter Weekend #3
- **Saturday, Oct. 26, 2019:** Closing celebration for all Indaba teams at St. John's Church in Beverly Farms

### **Where can we get more information?**

Indaba working group members will visit deanery assemblies this fall, attending each of the four pre-Convention forums in October and offering an informational gathering (TBA) in each region. There will also be an information table at Diocesan Convention on Nov. 3 in Hyannis.

#### ***Pre-Convention Forums (all beginning at 7 p.m.):***

Wednesday, Oct. 17 at St. Andrew's Church in Framingham;  
Thursday, Oct. 18 at Trinity Church in Topsfield;  
Tuesday, Oct. 23 at the Church of Our Saviour in Middleborough; and  
Wednesday, Oct. 24 at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Boston.

### **Read more about the use of Indaba in the Anglican Communion:**

*Living Reconciliation* by Phil Groves and Angharad Parry Jones (Forward Movement, 2014)

*Indaba! A Way of Listening, Engaging, and Understanding Across the Anglican Communion* by Paula Nesbitt (Church Publishing, 2017)